



FREEDOM WATCH



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Bagram, Afghanistan

News briefs

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West Nile may spread in U.S.

WASHINGTON — West Nile virus is an “emerging” epidemic that could spread throughout the U.S., the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Sunday. Dr. Julie Gerberding said on CBS’ *Face the Nation*, the population of birds infected is much broader than with most other viral diseases that cause a similar type of encephalitis, so the virus spreads more efficiently.

Crocs tear apart suicidal woman

BANGKOK — A Thai woman killed herself by jumping into a pit of more than 100 crocodiles. The woman, 40, climbed a two-meter high fence and jumped into a concrete enclosure at the Famut Prakarn Crocodile Farm on the outskirts of the Thai capital. A crocodile dragged the woman into a pond and animals swarmed over and tore her apart. “She did not cry or scream when she was bitten,” Tanet Virayaporn, the tour guide, said.

Air Force releases all specialties from Stop-Loss

By Master Sgt. Ron Tull
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The last of-ficer and enlisted specialties on Stop-Loss will be released Sept. 1.

In making the announcement, Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche said the release will be phased in during a one-month period to allow both the Air Force and affected personnel time for transition.

“We have arrived at a new steady-state,” Roche said. “Stop-Loss most certainly helped us get here successfully, but we had

pledged all along that we wouldn’t hold onto anyone longer than necessary.”

The release, which affects three officer and 15 enlisted specialties, will begin with people who had original retirement or separation dates prior to April 1. They will be able to leave beginning Sept. 1. During the second phase, individuals with retirement or separation dates between April 1 and Sept. 30 can be released. In the final phase, anyone with a retirement or separation date of Oct. 1 or later can separate at his or her established date.

Members can request to remain on active duty up to five months to transition to civilian life and use accrued leave. The release does not apply to airmen who are currently deployed in support of operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom; all deployed personnel will remain subject to Stop-Loss as long as they are deployed. Upon completion of deployment, people will have up to five months to transition.

Stop-Loss was implemented shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks to meet unprecedented mission requirements. The process was reviewed every 60 days.



Photo by Sgt. Reeba Critser

Italian VIP visit

Lt. Gen. Giovanni Sciandra, operational commander of Italian Air Forces, visited his airmen Friday at Camp Azzurro in Bagram Air Base. “I wanted to see the quality of life of my people,” Sciandra said. “We want our engineer battalion to contribute as best they can to Operation Enduring Freedom.”

JPRC greets, sends off Bagram AB service members

By Spc. Erica Leigh Foley
28th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan — The seatbelt light illuminates before the plane descends. Soldiers, airmen and Marines prepare to land at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Not knowing what to expect and what dangers lie within the war zone, or how to find their unit sponsor can be a little

1SG makes 'stern' impression on 18th Abn. soldiers

By Spc. Alredo Jimenez Jr.
28th Public Affairs Detachment

The large, brown door never looked this intimidating before. But it's not the door the shivering soldier is worried about; it's what behind it that's scaring him out of his boots. Standing there feeling more like a mouse than a military man, the soldier isn't sure he wants to even knock.

He knocks anyway. The command to enter is issued and he walks up to the desk, where a burly, clean-cut man is sitting. He turns and stares right at the quivering, young lad.

"What do you want?" he inquires, with eyes a buzzard has when he is circling his prey.

"I'm here for an interview first sergeant," the military journalist replies, wondering if he'd just yelp his response. One thing he did know is he should have brought a bucket along to fill all of his sweat.

"What!"

If his boots didn't feel like they were filled with cement, the journalist would have run out of there with his life.

"Just kidding. Come on over to my office. We will do the interview there."

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For three months, 1st Sgt. Gerald Robert Hendershot, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th Airborne Corps, has been involved in the most complex of situations surfacing at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. From making sure latrines are cleaned to mail pick-ups; from ensuring soldiers are doing the right thing to issuing stern disciplinary action, Hendershot is sure to be around.

"I'm up before most people because being a first sergeant is the most important job in the Army," Hendershot said. "Just

the way he carries himself in front of his troops is enough to make a difference in a soldier's life."



1st Sgt. Gerald Hendershot

Despite the fact soldiers practically try to avoid him because of his perceived callousness, Hendershot still manages to arouse their support and morale to uplifting proportions.

"It's important that I get up every morning," he said. "Some of them are looking forward to me being out there."

Some days those meetings can be a rude awaking for service members. For example, a few weeks ago, a soldier who was supposed to be guarding the Afghan employees let them roam around. Hendershot, resembling Gen. George Patton, saw this and fired off a tirade that would embarrass John McEnroe.

Other days, like this one, can be as calm as any coast in Texas. No yelling, just kudos. No smoke coming out of his nostrils — just slow, relaxing breaths. No teeth grinding, just a sweet smile.

"When somebody spots me and says 'good morning,' it makes me feel good inside," Hendershot said. "It makes me want to do my best for them."

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Sometimes things happen by accident. Hendershot's entry into the armed service is no exception.

Twenty years ago, he was sitting in a Florida restaurant enjoying a meal and trying to figure a way to get out of debt. Fresh from graduating from Slippery Rock State, he arrived in the Sunshine State after applying at 75 different high schools for a teaching job.

Sitting at the next table, an

Army recruiter initiated a conversation with the struggling youngster. The recruiter intrigued him on the possibility of having his loans paid off by the Army. He promised him an early promotion, \$5,000 signing bonus and a choice of duty station.

Hendershot told the recruiter to put it in a contract and he would think about it. The choice was a no-brainer. The one-time All-state soccer player at North Warren Regional High School had grown up in a small country farming community in Johnsonburg, N.J. He was the oldest of five children and had few neighbors.

"We were all country, all farming, all the time," Hendershot said. "We milked cows, fished and grew a garden."

The nearest big city was New York City, which was 70 miles away.

His high school was an all-white institution with a single black student.

Sensing there was a bigger world out there, Hendershot decided to go for it in 1983.

"The main reason I joined was so they could pay off the loans," Hendershot said. "But as the years went by, I enjoyed what I was doing as an infantryman. So I stayed in."

What started off as a business decision turned out to be an adventure of a lifetime as he traveled around the globe visiting such hot spots as Kosovo, Macedonia, Honduras, Panama, Germany, Puerto Rico, Canada and Afghanistan.

Furthermore, he's provided a comfortable lifestyle for his two stepchildren, Stephanie and Dallas, and his three biological kids, Kenneth, Joseph and Katelyn in Fayetteville, N.C., for the past 12 years. His wife, Tammy, is a seafood manager at the local market.

"It has been a wonderful experience," Hendershot said.

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Life hasn't been the same for anyone since the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and Hendershot fully understands his mission in Afghanistan.

"I was talking with a commander, discussing an upcoming field training exercise when the attacks occurred," Hendershot said. "At first, we didn't know what was happening, but we eventually found out. It was quite a tragedy, the loss of life, and it's hard to believe there are people who would take innocent people's lives."

Hendershot, who is in charge of 1,258 soldiers, was eager to be part of the battle against terrorism.

"I was prepared and ready to come to accomplish the mission for the 18th Airborne Corps to assist those who were on the ground," he said. "We have made it a better place to live because our crew is made up of many military occupational specialties. We are a working group who must rely on one another to ensure the mission is completed."

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The interview ended as peacefully as it had begun, with 1st Sgt. Hendershot leaning back in his chair offering his thanks for the opportunity to be interviewed.

"I haven't done one of these in a long time, but I know you'll do alright," he said.

The journalist rose from his seat and started for the door. He peered to his left and saw the misunderstood first sergeant looking out of the window, probably proud of reminiscing all his thoughts to a total stranger.

The door didn't make a sound as it closed.

JPRC, from Page 1

unsettling, especially for new troops.

The Joint Personnel Reception Center has a service member who greets each aircraft at the entry control point. Some members are in transit to another destination, but many are here to make Bagram their temporary home.

"We process an average of 150 people in and out of Bagram on a daily basis," said Capt. Danny E. Davis, USAF officer in charge, JPRC base operations.

The JPRC team is

made up of 12 soldiers and one Marine with varying backgrounds and skills, including personnel and cargo specialists.

"The (troops) have extremely different backgrounds and MOS skills; however, they all have come together to meet our mission of taking care of people and they do it first class," Davis said.

The JPRC is primarily responsible for personnel accountability of every Department of Defense member entering and departing Bagram Air Base.

Immediately upon arrival, the JPRC assists incoming service members with their integration into the base. The center also ensures each new arrival is met by a sponsor or arranges to have members driven to their new units.

"Once the members enter our center, they are required to sign in and receive a briefing about base operations and mine awareness," said Davis.

Some of the information covered in the briefs is how to find legal, finance and medical assistance. Other

things covered are rules within the base, tent city etiquette and the dress code.

"We take pride in helping our customers with all their questions and do all we can to make them as prepared as possible to assist in fighting this war," said Davis.

The center has improved over the last few months.

"Just a couple of months ago our tents had neither air conditioning nor electricity, but we have managed to continuously upgrade our facilities as well as install more con-

veniences such as television and microwaves (for the incoming and outgoing soldiers to use)," Davis said.

He also stressed the center's importance.

"Personnel accountability and a member's location are extremely important in the unfortunate event of a casualty," Davis said.

Many customers have stated that this has been the best inprocessing they have received in the area of responsibility, which is a testament to the staff's concern for customers, said Davis.

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>
<u>Bagram:</u>	<i>Dusty</i> H: 95F L: 73F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 95F L: 72F
<u>Khandahar:</u>	<i>Sunny</i> H: 106F L: 73F	<i>Dusty</i> H: 108F L: 73F
<u>Kabul:</u>	<i>Haze</i> H: 95F L: 73F	<i>Mostly clear</i> H: 93F L: 73F
<u>Uzbekistan:</u>	<i>Clear</i> H: 106F L: 70F	<i>Clear</i> H: 105F L: 70F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

FREEDOM WATCH

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COALITION SPORTSZONE

Woods wins Buick Open; ready for PGA championship

GRAND BLANC, Mich. — Tiger Woods has won the PGA Championship two ways: by playing the previous week and by practicing and resting.

Now he will attempt to win the final major of the year off a victory.

Woods shot a 2-under 70 Sunday to win the Buick Open by four shots at 17-under. It was his 33rd PGA Tour victory and fourth in his last eight starts.

"You want to feel like you're playing well going into a championship," Woods said. "And any time you win, you feel good."

Although he missed a chance to win the Grand Slam with his 28th-place tie at the British Open three weeks ago, Woods has an opportunity to do something no other golfer has, beginning Thursday at Hazeltine in Chaska, Minn.

Woods, who won the Masters and U.S. Open this year, will be the first to win three majors in a year twice if he wins the PGA Championship. Ben Hogan did it in 1953 and Woods, who has won seven of the last 12 majors, did it two years ago.

"That would rank right up there," said Woods, who was to fly Sunday night to Minnesota. "Hopefully I can add that to my list. It's already been a successful year and I would like to make it even more successful."

Esteban Toledo, who began the final round one stroke behind Woods, stayed with the world's best golfer through 12 holes, but then collapsed with three consecutive bogeys.

Toledo shot a 1-over-73 to finish at 13-under, tied for second with Mark O'Meara (68), Brian Gay (68) and Fred Funk (71). It matched Toledo's best finish and moved him from 118 to 85 on the money list.

Actor-racer badly hurt in practice crash

SPARTA, Ky. — Actor and Infiniti Pro Series driver Jason Priestley's race car crashed head-on into a wall at nearly 180 mph Sunday at the Kentucky Speedway, breaking his back and leaving him in serious condition with a concussion and other injuries.

The former "Beverly Hills 90210" television star was on a respirator to keep him sedated, but he was breathing on his own and was alert, Indy Racing League medical director Henry Bock said.

Priestley was flown to the University of Kentucky Medical Center with a spinal fracture in the middle of his back and a closed head injury, as well as a broken nose and broken bones in both feet, Bock said.

"At this time, there's no indication there's any other injury to the head (besides a concussion)," Bock said. "His vital signs are stable. ... He has his eyes open, he looks around and will follow commands."

Bock said there was no sign of paralysis and that tests on Priestley would continue probably through the night. He would not speculate on how long his recovery would take.

2002 Major League standings

American League East			GB
N.Y. Yankees	72-44	.621	-
Boston	68-48	.586	4
Baltimore	56-59	.487	15.5
American League Central			GB
Minnesota	70-49	.588	-
Chicago (AL)	57-62	.479	13
Cleveland	51-65	.440	17.5
American League West			GB
Seattle	72-46	.610	-
Anaheim	69-48	.590	2.5
Oakland	68-50	.576	4
National League East			GB
Atlanta	77-40	.658	-
N.Y. Mets	58-58	.500	18.5
Montreal	58-59	.496	19
National League Central			GB
St. Louis	61-52	.540	-
Cincinnati	61-55	.526	1.5
Houston	60-56	.517	2.5
National League West			GB
Arizona	73-45	.619	-
Los Angeles	66-51	.564	6.5
San Francisco	65-52	.556	7.5

Sunday

Boston	3-1	Minnesota
Cincinnati	9-7	San Diego
Texas	11-5	Cleveland
Milwaukee	6-2	Montreal
Atlanta	13-3	Houston
Chicago Cubs	12-9	Colorado
Chicago W. Sox	6-5	Seattle
San Francisco	5-4	Pittsburgh
N.Y. Yankees	8-5	Oakland
Detroit	2-1	Baltimore
Anaheim	1-0	Toronto
Kansas City	10-0	Tampa Bay
Arizona	9-2	Florida
St. Louis	7-0	N.Y. Mets, Btm 6th
Philadelphia	3-3	Los Angeles, Top 8th

Today

Minnesota	at	Baltimore
Oakland	at	Boston
Tampa Bay	at	Cleveland
Texas	at	Detroit
Kansas City	at	N.Y. Yankees
Seattle	at	Toronto
Anaheim	at	Chicago W. Sox
N.Y. Mets	at	Milwaukee
Florida	at	Houston
Montreal	at	St. Louis
Cincinnati	at	Colorado
Philadelphia	at	San Diego
Atlanta	at	Arizona